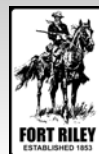


In Step on Channel 2

6:30 a.m. In Step
8 a.m. In Step
Noon In Step
6 p.m. In Step
10 p.m. In Step

Fort Riley Community



September 19, 2003

America's Warfighting Center

Page 11

Remembering the past Kansas native one of many honored today

By Christie Yanoover

Chief, Community Relations

He is a young man. At 23-years-old, his pale smooth-shaven face appears innocent, childish almost. His rested blue eyes, adorned with wire-rimmed glasses, bare forgiveness.

Yet this face, these eyes have experienced the unimaginable, for they belong to a prisoner of war.

Pfc. Patrick Miller, the youngest of four and a father to two, was captured March 23 near the Iraqi city of Nasiriyah when his unit, the 507th Maintenance Company, from Fort Bliss, Texas, was ambushed.

He joined the Army a little more than a year ago to pay off student loans and to gain experience as a welder. Six months after basic training, he received orders to deploy, and a month later, on Feb. 17, he was on a plane to the Persian Gulf.

Details of his capture and experience as a prisoner of war are still under investigation, but his emotions have begun to surface.

Miller was among five soldiers who were captured that Sunday in March, and although he said there is no way to explain his experience, for the first couple of days, he asked himself why he was among the survivors.

"There was that 'what if' period," he said, "but you really can't change anything that happens. Everything happens for a reason."

Miller's mother, Mary Pickering, was worried when her son joined the Army, and his capture, just four days after the beginning of the war, added to her disheartenment. Miller's wife, Jessa, notified her of the situation, and within hours she saw her son on television.

"By seeing the image, I knew he was at least alive, so that gave me the hope that he would be coming home," said Pickering, as she mentally relived the experience. "That's one reason why I watched the TV was to see if I would hear anything about if they had gotten out."

Miller, however, was on the other side of

the camera, and his experiences weren't as reassuring. "I was just thinking that I might not ever see them again," he said.

Despite the fear and anxiety, Miller said he didn't dwell on the negative.

"We (the POWs) formed a bond that will probably always be there-like a mini family," he said.

After days without dialogue, they were able to communicate, and one of the warrant officers, who had been through Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape training, began teaching the others what he could. Miller and the others hadn't received SERE training as combat service support soldiers.

"The only thing they teach you in basic is how to search enemy prisoners, but everybody needs some sort of SERE training so they know how to conduct themselves, if they are put in that situation," he said.

"There is no such thing as in the rear with the gear. The rear is when you're back across the pond," he said.

While Miller and his cohorts were executing survival techniques, Miller's mother continued to worry because of U.S. strikes against the "pockets of resistance." "My number one fear was when we were bombing," she said. She was worried that her son was in Baghdad near the air attacks.

Days grew into weeks, and the war progressed. Miller's mother and wife tried to remain busy to help the time pass by. "Being with Jessa helped," said Pickering. "I had a lot of people that I worked with who I could talk to, and I got lots of e-mail."

Then, after a 21-day emotional roller coaster, Miller was rescued on April 13. Although Army officials were in the process of notifying all of the families, Jessa and Pickering found out Miller was rescued when the local media called.

"I got up and went downstairs and was glued to the TV until they were transferred from the helicopter to the ambulance, and I recognized him," said Pickering.

As soon as she saw him she shouted to her husband, "There is he is! There he is!"

"You just can't explain the emotions that

you feel. It was just a wonderful feeling to know that he was alive and safe, and he was coming home," she said.

Miller was transported to a hospital in Kuwait, where he was welcomed by some of the cards and packages that Jessa had sent after he deployed.

Then, in less than a week, he reached Fort Bliss and the arms of his loved ones.

When Pickering first saw her son, she told him that she loved him. "I knew I was going to tell him I loved him, but I just started crying and wouldn't let go of him," she said.

"She said, 'don't ever scare me like that again,'" Miller said.

Although Miller had to take medications to help him sleep at night, he said his healing process has not been too difficult in comparison. "There are probably other people who are still healing for people who didn't make it home."

Miller and the others were given a month of convalescent leave, but as an unwritten page in history, their journey has just begun. Soon after Miller's rescue, national and local media outlets contacted him hoping to tell his story. And, country music singer, Toby Keith, honored him in his hometown of Valley Center.

"It's weird," said Miller. "People I don't even know are thanking me for what I'm supposed to do-what I get paid to do."

When Miller was honored at a Kansas State University football game in April, strangers, from children to veterans, made an extended effort just to shake his hand, and many called him a hero, which is a title he respectfully rejects. "I really don't understand. All I did was my job," he said with sincerity and devotion.

Jessa believes her husband is a hero, however, not because he was a prisoner of war, but because he is a soldier. "They all are. They're all heroes to be over there, especially the ones that died," she said.

His mother agreed. "He was over there to keep our freedom and to get Iraq its freedom. I'm just so proud of him and glad that he's home."

After the soldier is deployed,

Doyle suggests being honest and making sure the children know that it is all right to talk about what is going on whenever they feel they need to.

"Depending on the developmental level of the child, information can be presented simply and honestly," said Doyle. "Mommy or Daddy is working away from home doing an important job. The work is not finished and it is a difficult job. Spending time talking about what they are thinking is more helpful. Often children are less interested in the response than knowing that it's O.K. to talk about what they are feeling or thinking."

"It is helpful to spend time with children and encourage them to talk about their feelings, tell sto-

Volunteer moms make difference

By Vicki Ohmacht

Child Development Center

Whether they are helping with bulletin board displays or providing clerical support, volunteer moms at the Child Development Center make a difference, according to the center director.

"Since our program mostly meets the needs of working parents, our parents have little time to volunteer. When we do have parents who have the extra time and willingness to help out, it is a tremendous help," Nikki Crisman, director, CDC, said. "I really enjoy having parents pitch in to help our staff get caught up on day-to-day tasks or special projects."

The children of the volunteers seem to feel extra special when Mom or Dad is at their 'school' helping out.

Jennifer Arp is one parent who volunteered at the CDC until recently. Her son, Tyler, was enrolled in the Part-Day Preschool Program prior to starting kindergarten this fall. Jennifer worked on bulletin boards, laminated displays, made copies and completed other projects.

"Volunteering at the CDC kept me informed and involved in what was going on in my son's program," she said. "There were always projects they don't have enough time to do."

Jennifer's volunteer work doesn't end at the CDC. She also volunteers at the school her other son, Christian, 9, attends, as well as helping the 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Family Readiness Group. She began volunteering while in Germany and at Fort Lewis, Wash., with her husband, Staff Sgt. Kevin Arp.

"The military has afforded me the opportunity to be a stay-at-

home Mom, and volunteering helps me be involved in my children's experiences," she said. "Volunteering also makes the teacher's job easier, and they can then concentrate more on the kids. It's a win-win situation for everyone."

Jennifer's efforts "took a lot of work off the staff," according to Sharon Brandes, lead education technician, Module 10.

"We only have so much time to do extra things, and it was great having Jennifer's help," Brandes said.

"Tyler was proud of his mom. He introduced her to the other kids and always said, 'My mom is helping us.'"

Other volunteer parents choose to do different projects.

"I enjoy giving my time just helping people," Ziegenfuss said. Her son, Creighton, 3, is enrolled in the Part-Day Preschool Program, and her daughter, Adelle, 6 months, attends the Hourly Program at the CDC.

Like Jennifer, Carren also has a history of volunteer work. Carren worked as a domestic violence advocate at Fort Knox, Ky., and as a tutor for the School-Age Services program at Fort Stewart, Ga. while assigned there with her husband, Capt. Charles Ziegenfuss, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor.

Ziegenfuss encourages others to volunteer.

"I am always encouraging other people to volunteer somewhere. You can volunteer for as long as you want, when you want," she said.

For more information on volunteering at a Child and Youth Services Program, contact Janice Green, 239-4847.



Volunteer Jennifer Arp and her son, Tyler, work on a project at the Child Development Center.

CDC/Ohmacht

September 19, 2003

National POW/MIA Recognition Day

www.dtic.mil/dpmo/

Department of Defense Graphic

New AKO feature helpful to families

By Bill Putnam

Army News Service

The Army recently launched a new "benefits tool" on Army Knowledge Online for soldiers, retirees and their families.

The new site on AKO links together for the first time all of the Web sites that cover the "life cycle" of the soldier, from initial enlistment to retirement and beyond, said John Radke, chief, Army Retirement Services.

"Our goal is for one-stop shopping" of a soldier's benefits, Radke said.

Located under AKO's "Self Service," the links send users to an AKO site that has Web site links covering topics like Tri-Care, Army Recruiting, Defense Finance Service, Casualty Assistance and Veterans Burial Benefits, said Radke.

Work began on the site in September 2001 when Lt. Gen. John Le Moyné, the Army's personnel chief, wanted a simple place for soldiers and their families to find out what they're entitled to at any given moment of their career, Radke said.

"We're bringing together the entire Army family," he said. A number of different ways to present the links have been worked out since development began, said Col. Phil Smith, the deputy director of Army Personnel Transformation (G-1).

Recruiters, young soldiers and spouses were brought in and gave feedback on the site's design, Smith said.

But the tool isn't entirely for everyone stationed at a remote place and won't stay static, said Smith. Links might be added or deleted as time goes on, he said.

The tool will be good for new Army families, like first enlistment soldiers and their families, said Smith.

See AKO Page 12

Letters important to soldiers, families

By Ryan D. Wood

Staff Writer

With so many soldiers currently deployed, the stress of separation on family members and soldiers alike can be a daunting task to deal with. Letters home and to the soldiers offer an opportunity to connect, but also require some thought when deciding how best to help soldiers and family deal with the pressure separation.

How to help family members, especially children, deal with a deployment can be effected by communication from the soldier. Questions such as what topics should be discussed with children or what subjects are better left until the soldier returns can effect morale and job effectiveness of soldiers and family members alike.

Capt. Nicole Doyle, staff psychologist, Medical Activity, Irwin Army Community Hospital, said one of the best ways to start working with family members before the soldier departs.

"Identifying specific attachment objects such as pictures, stuffed animals or clothing that can readily be available to the child or infant can serve as reminders and maintain connections between children and parents during a separation," Doyle said. "Recording voices and sto-

ries can be helpful and fill a void for children. Making several copies and having a backup plan is handy in case a tape or object is misplaced."

After the soldier is deployed,

Doyle suggests being honest and making sure the children know that it is all right to talk about what is going on whenever they feel they need to.

"Depending on the developmental level of the child, information can be presented simply and honestly," said Doyle. "Mommy or Daddy is working away from home doing an important job. The work is not finished and it is a difficult job. Spending time talking about what they are thinking is more helpful. Often children are less interested in the response than knowing that it's O.K. to talk about what they are feeling or thinking."

"It is helpful to spend time with children and encourage them to talk about their feelings, tell sto-

ries or draw pictures about what they are thinking. Talk with them and present information at a level they can understand," said Doyle.

When writing letters to the soldier, Doyle said it is important to

stand that there are multiple limitations that exist when separated from a loved one. It is vital to be honest about the information that is provided can help increase or decrease the emotional stress that is being placed on the soldier, said Doyle.

"It is usually more helpful to focus on providing specific information about what the soldier or family member can directly influence or control," said Doyle. "Try to discuss topics in specifics rather than generalities and what can be done rather than what might be. That may increase problem-solving efforts and serve to accomplish tasks. To present concerns about issues that are out of the soldier or family member's

ability to change or address can serve to introduce stress and increase concern and worry."

Doyle also suggests that families take advantage of the support groups and agencies that are available for just this kind of event.

"Open up channels of communication with Family Readiness Groups and foster assistance to each other to address questions about family concerns," said Doyle. "There are a number of agencies, such as the Soldier Family and Support Center, New Parent Support Program, chaplains and individuals, that are available to assist families and command personnel who are interested in fostering positive separations between families and soldiers. It is very important to present concerns, offer feedback and possible solutions when facing separation difficulties or questions."

For more information on dealing with separation or to find out about programs that are available to assist families of deployed soldiers, contact your FRG or call the Soldier and Family Support Center, 239-9548. There is also a pamphlet, "Deployment - Activities for parents and children facing separation and reunion," available at Behavioral Health building 602, and at the Soldier and Family Support Center.





Rally Point offers variety of activities to soldiers, community

By Adam Clayton
K-State Intern

More than a place to go dance and socialize, Rally Point offers programs for every aspect of the community. Rally Point is an all-purpose facility that caters to civilian and military alike.

"We're a community club. So, we try to have programs going for all aspects of the community," said Mike Steffens, general manager.

Closed only Mondays and Tuesdays, Rally Point kicks off its week on Wednesday with 10-cent wings and karaoke. Among the other top nights is Family Night on Friday and Saturday late night.

"Friday night is Family Night from 5-8 p.m. We show a Disney movie. Then, we have a dinner buffet, and music and

dancing for the kids afterward," said Steffens.

Saturday night is an 18 and over dance party from 11 p.m. - 4 a.m. "Late night Saturdays are our most popular night. We have more civilians on Saturday nights than we do military," said Steffens.

Late night on Saturdays has gone over so well that they have implemented the same format on Friday nights said Steffens.

Rounding out the week is NFL or professional wrestling on Sunday.

"We have 48 TVs, three of which are 100-inch TVs. On Sundays, we can show eight football games," said Steffens. "Once a month, we do professional wrestling on Pay Per View. It is usually the last Sunday of every month."

Rally Point has a daily lunch buffet at Primo's Express and a snack bar menu as

well.

"Our menu includes all kinds of food besides the buffet. Pizza, hamburgers and wings are our bestsellers," said Steffens.

Steffens said Rally Point is as busy as ever since Riley's Conference Center closed down for renovation last December.

"Ever since Riley's closed down, we have handled all of their bookings over here," said Becky Stedman, administrative assistant, who came from Riley's.

On top of the regular weekly schedule, Rally Point will host any event brought to them. They have a conference room for meetings or private parties.

"We can do division meetings and Noncommissioned Officers meetings. We can also do homecoming parties and socials," said Stedman.

Rally Point can handle special occasions too.

"We do Christmas balls. If units have enough money, they will usually have a unit formal in December. Basically, we do all events," said Stedman.

The Rally Point staff prepared the meal for the annual Sept. 11 prayer breakfast. "I was up until midnight cooking food for the prayer breakfast..." said Steffens.

According to Stedman, they will do things that have no connection with the military as well.

"The Special Olympics are coming to town, and we will be feeding them lunch when they are here. That event has no affiliation with the Army," said Stedman.

"The main point I want to get across is that you don't have to be in the military to use this facility. Civilians can use this facility at any time. I don't think most people realize that," said Steffens.

The facility itself has several features

to keep customers satisfied.

All government buildings prohibit smoking, so Steffens has installed a smoking room that meets federal regulations.

"It has a censor when you open the door that turns on a vent and sucks the smoke out of the room. It doesn't even smell like smoke," said Steffens. "This room is always full on the weekends, and those who don't smoke can enjoy the rest of the club."

There is a room called the Skybox where a private party of up to 10 people can sit and watch the program of their choice. The room is filled with red leather couches, a 37-inch TV and overlooks the dance floor.

The building also boasts one of the biggest dance floors in the area and has a capacity for over 600 people.

Open House Expo Tent offers variety of information

By Christopher Selmek
19th P4D

Among the attractions at this year's Open House on Fort Riley will be the Expo Tent, located in the center of Cavalry Parade Field.

The tent will feature information from the local community and activities available on post. Fort Riley units will display information about their role in the post's historical development as well.

"The purpose of the unit displays is to celebrate the history of Fort Riley and also to show how we're a part of history," said Vickie Hoffman, commercial sponsorship special events coordinator,

Directorate of Community Activities.

"Many units on Fort Riley have historical boards, not only from last year's celebration but from years and years ago, that tell about Fort Riley and about what Fort Riley soldiers have done in the past," said Hoffman.

The expo tent will be open all day during the festival and will contain between 30 and 40 informational displays from post activities and units, as well as many local community activities.

In addition to the historical displays, the expo tent will include information about Morale, Welfare and Recreation and other services on Fort Riley. Many of the booths will have hands on activities, Hoffman added.

"Everybody on Fort Riley has a different job to do, and it's important to recognize that diversity," she said.

"Booths are still available to units and organizations that would like to make a display for the Expo Tent," Hoffman said.

"There will be no charge to units that wish to participate, and all are encouraged," Hoffman said.

Additionally, several of the businesses that set up displays in the Expo Tent will have information about their upcoming events and the services they offer, said Hoffman.

She said there are several more businesses participating this year than before, but the overall spirit of the Expo Tent remains unchanged.

"Last year we had between seven and eight thousand people," she said, "so we're hoping for an even bigger crowd this year. It is our 150th anniversary."

Any unit or organization wishing to participate may call Hoffman, 239-8161.

Spouses can attend ACAP programs

By David Horner
ACAP

This is a great time for the spouse whose soldier is thinking about getting out to use the Fort Riley University Army Career and Alumni Program. The spouse, who is keeping the home fires burning, can use this opportunity to prepare and conduct a job search. The spouse can also do

some preparatory job search work for the absent soldier.

ACAP can provide the spouse with a briefing on transition benefits and entitlements as well as training and assistance in conducting a job search. These services are available for all soldiers and their spouses still at Fort Riley. Those who might ETS can start the search one year prior to ETS and those who might retire

can start two years prior to retirement.

The ACAP staff is available to provide information to spouse and soldier groups to include speaking at meetings.

For more information, contact ACAP, 239-2278 or 239-2248, e-mail acap@riley.army.mil or visit the ACAP Center, building 210, room 1, Personnel Processing Center, Main Post.

AKO continued from page 1

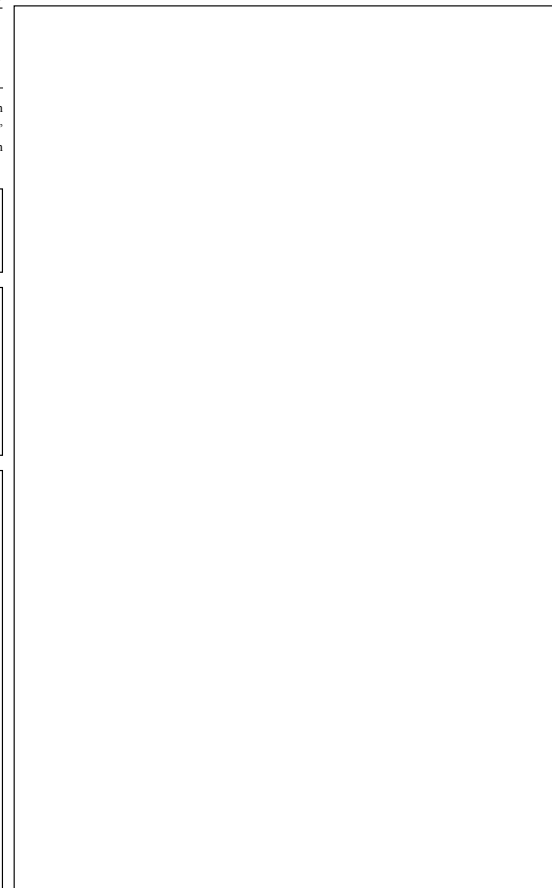
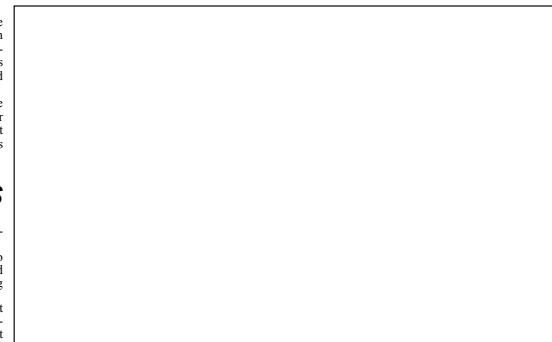
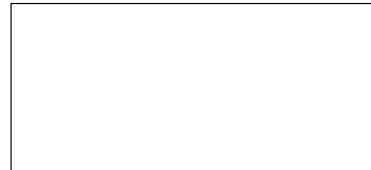
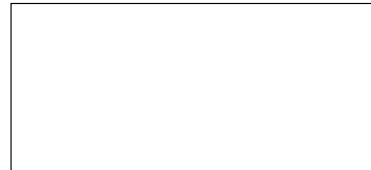
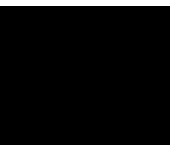
That soldier and his wife, for example, can sit down at home and find out how much their Basic Allowance for Housing will be around Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., he said.

For a spouse to access the site, the soldier or retiree needs to sign them up for a guest AKO account, Radke said.

All of the sites are governmental and won't take a soldier to a commercial Web site that will try and sell them something, Smith said.

There will be some information for Army civilian employees, Radke said.

"But our intent was to focus on the soldier," he said.



Open House

Fort Riley celebrates 150 years with fun for kids of all ages

By Christopher Selmek
19th PAD

Fort Riley will celebrate 150 years Oct. 4, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., with an Open House featuring attractions for all ages. Fort Riley will transform for one day into something entirely unlike your typical military installation.

Adults might first be attracted to some of the more featured events, such as the static displays of equipment and the Veterans' Tent, but their children will also be entertained.

For the children who come to the celebration, there will be the chance to visit kiddie rides and a petting zoo, along with other attractions such as a children's obstacle course, laser assault course, military working dogs and the Fort Riley

Honor Guard demonstrations.

"We intend to draw families to the Open House to show them what Fort Riley has to offer," said Vickie Hoffman, special events coordinator, Directorate of Community Activities.

The kiddie rides, located on Cavalry Parade Field, will include "Tubs of Fun," a trackless train, "Propella the Airplane" and a Moonwalk. Nearby will also be a petting zoo, which will have a camel, zebra, miniature donkey, llama, water buffalo, African tortoise, alpaca, miniature zebras and pygmy goats.

On the east end of Cavalry Parade Field, children and adults will be able to climb on and sit in the static displays, according to Hoffman, adding some fun to an otherwise grown-up exhibit.

Also on the east end of Cavalry Parade Field, children will see a demonstration

by military working dogs and their military handlers showing controlled aggression and explosive and drug detection.

In the northwest corner of Cavalry Parade Field, children and adults will have the opportunity to visit a Civil War era encampment and watch cavalry soldiers demonstrate equestrian skills and perform saber drills.

The obstacle course, located at Tuttle Park, will assign children to the role of a downed pilot trying to survive and be rescued.

"They must negotiate an obstacle course complete with climbing walls, low crawls, aggressors and dummy drags, and navigate to an extraction point where they will 'pop smoke' to guide the choppers in," said Hoffman. "Upon successful completion of the course, all children will receive flight wings."

In the laser assault course, located on Sturgis Field, children who meet the minimum height requirement can fire an M16 rifle, fitted with Multi-Integrated Laser Enhanced System, at pop-up targets at various ranges. They can also fire machine guns at an adjacent station.

According to Hoffman, it is especially important this year to please children during the Apple Day celebration.

"We must maintain our children's activities while their parents are deployed," said Hoffman. "The Open House is always focused with the family in mind, and this year it is even more important with so many parents and spouses being away from home. Fort Riley continues to support soldier morale and the morale and welfare of those families still living in our community."



Post Photo

Children and parents ride the Tubs of Fun at the Open House.

O p e n House Map

Walk through time at Open House Veterans' Tent

By Bobby Miller
19th PAD

Fort Riley's Open House is a chance for civilians and military members to come together and celebrate the accomplishments of Fort Riley and its soldiers. Static displays, a petting zoo and an obstacle course are a few of the attractions people can experience while visiting Fort Riley.

However, many people will come to learn a little history and meet soldiers who fought in past conflicts. These people are coming to take a tour of the Veterans' Tent.

The Veterans' Tent, to be located west of the U.S. Cavalry Museum, is one of the many attractions that people can see while visiting Fort Riley's Open House. Fort Riley is also celebrating its 150th anniversary as a post, which makes this day even more special.

Christie Vanover, community relations chief, Fort Riley Public Affairs Office, said the tent highlights battles from WWII to present day, including both photos and video. The tent will also have veterans on hand who will act as a living history, giving their insight to the wars they fought in. Vanover hopes to have veterans from each of the major conflicts at

the Open House. Chairs will be set up near the tent to allow soldiers and family members from today to meet with the soldiers of yesterday.

"The Veterans' Tent is a chance for vets to come together and reminisce," said Deb Skidmore, deputy public affairs officer.

This is the third year the Veter-

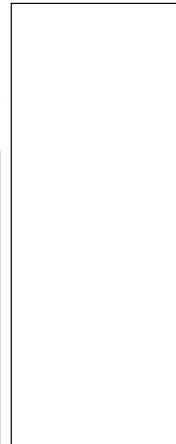
ans' Tent is being displayed and it has expanded to include conflicts from the last year.

"The past Veterans' Tent ended with Operation Desert Storm. After the Sept. 11 tragedies, we added a venue about 9/11. We have a video and some photos of the Pentagon, specifically relating to the military," said Vanover.

"This year we plan to add Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom photos that will highlight Fort Riley soldiers who are participating in these operations."

Open House is scheduled from

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Parking is free on the installation. People looking for a little history on Fort Riley and the soldiers who served in past conflicts should take a peek inside the Veterans' Tent during this year's event.



Letters to the Front

"Hang in there guys. We are behind you 100 percent here at home. If you are going to be one, be a Big Red One. Duty First. Take care."- *Charles Moy, U.S. Army Veteran*

"I just wanted to tell Sgt. Thomas Abney that he is loved and missed so much. TJ talks about you all the time. He misses his daddy. I miss you so much. Come home soon and please stay safe. I love you so much, and I'll be here waiting for your return home. You're doing great. I'm proud of you. To all of the other men and women, keep up the good work and stay safe. Come home soon!"- *Love, your wife, Tasha and son, T.J., Fort Riley*

"I'm a mom of a soldier that is in Iraq. I know you guys have it tough. Keep up the good work. You are true American heroes. I pray for all of you everyday. This country is free because of guys like you. Hoahh!"- *Military mother*

"To Staff Sgt. Jose Ruiz: I'm sending you all my love. You have no idea how much you are missed and loved by your daughter, Destiny, and myself, your wife. I want you to know that we talk about

you all day and have you in our minds and hearts every second. I am so proud of you and have the utmost respect for you, not only as a husband, but also as an Army soldier. I am so glad that you have already received the last letter I wrote. I was so excited to find that out, but what touched me the most is when you said that it touched your heart to know that I would think of you and display my love for you. I need you to know that this is only another task for us to accomplish, but I believe with all my heart that God will bring you home, as well as all the other soldiers away from home. Your baby girl, Destiny, and I are doing just fine. We pray, and will continue to pray, for you and all the others serving in this war. You have been gone for over half a year now, and, as I said before, you are very dedicated. After 16 years of serving in the military, you have never given up. You are the most loving man in the world. You are the greatest father to Destiny, and I wouldn't trade you for the world! We can't wait for you to come home. I am so in love with you and have never in my life missed someone so much! All your family from Texas and around the world say hello and can't wait to welcome you home. Take care and please stay safe. We love and

miss you more than you will ever know. I can't wait for my eyes and you to be in front of me!"- *Love, Destiny and Sonia Ruiz, military family*

"To my precious and beloved husband, Staff Sgt. Bradley Barta, and the soldiers of 977th Military Police Company: I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your hard dedication and the sacrifices you chose to make, not only for my family, but for everybody in America. It is you, the soldier, who gives us this freedom and the great life we have in America. You have made all of us in America very proud. Keep up the great job, and may you all stay safe. We love you and miss you all very much. May God grant you peace, courage, strength, guidance and love for this long journey that lies ahead. You are all in our prayers, thoughts and close to our hearts. May you stay safe and come home very soon! To my beloved husband, we love you and miss you very much. You are in our thoughts, prayers and hearts. We are very proud of you. God bless you and stay safe. Always remember, no matter how far apart the oceans may be, you are in our hearts and we love you with all our hearts. We will be

here waiting for your safe return. We love you, and know we are with you. Take care of each other and know we all support you. You are not alone in this war!"- *All our love, Heather, Joshua and Gabrielle Barta, proud military spouse and a huge supporter of our troops.*

"To my husband, Sgt. Eugene Poindexter, 331st Sig. Co., I wish him love, peace, health and to come home safely to me and our 3-year-old daughter, Kierra. God bless all the soldiers that have been overseas, the soldiers who have recently left and the soldiers who will leave soon. I pray that you will all come home safe and sound to your families and loved ones! Thank you!"- *Erika Poindexter, Parker, Ariz.*

"To Spec. Chris Stewart, 2nd Bn., 70th Armor: We love you so much! Stay safe and come home soon! Your boys say hi and they miss you! We are all so very proud of you. You will always be our hero! We will be counting down the days until you finally come home to us!"- *Love always and forever, Carin, Christopher, & Ryan Stewart, Army wife, Fort Riley*

"To Pvt. James Webb, 1st Brigade: Jamey, I heard from your mom that you are already in Iraq. Jackie said you stopped in Germany. I tried to call you three times at Fort Riley, but with no luck. The messages were full. We really miss you. Jackie went to school with Christian and it sounds like he is having fun. He has your picture with him. His teacher already knows all about you. I went to Walhalla last weekend. Sissy, Madge and Grandma were all there. Stephanie is planning her wedding for this next April. Maybe you can e-mail us back. I will give you Jamie's address. Ameera is back in college. Everyone is okay. We love and miss you."- *Sandra*

"To my husband, Sgt. Frank Senesac: I am so proud of you. Everyone back home is praying for you and waiting for your safe return. We love you very much. You are truly our hero! The kids send their love and miss you very much. I love you very much and can't wait to hold you in my arms again. Not a second goes by in the day that I don't think about you and wonder about how you are doing. Just remember, every day is a day closer to coming home. We love you so much! Take care, and be very careful."- *Diane,*

Steven, Dalton and Kara, Fort Riley

If you would like to send messages of support to the troops deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, e-mail your message to afznpomr@riley.army.mil. Soldiers, include your name, rank, unit and hometown. Military spouses and civilians, include your name, job and hometown. You can also drop off a message at the Soldier and Family Support Center, building 7264, at the front desk.

"Dear Fort Riley troops: Thank you. Thank you for the risks you are taking and the lives you are saving and for the causes for which you are sacrificing. Know that you are being supported, honored and missed. There are more people than you can possibly know that are thinking of you, praying for you and wishing you the very best every single day. We have not forgotten about you or taken you for granted. The only reason America is functioning almost like normal is because we have a shield that protects and shelters us - and that's you. Good luck and come home soon!"- *Best wishes, Amber O'Brien, Windsor, Calif.*

ITR

The Information, Ticketing and Registration office is located in building 6918, across from the PK. The hours of operation are Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Saturday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. and the office is closed on federal holidays. For further information, call ITR, 239-5614 or 239-4415. Check out the Department of Army Leisure Travel website at www.offdutytavel.com for more great deals on travel.

ITR services and discount attractions tickets are available to active duty military, retirees, National Guard, reservists, Department of Army Civilians and family members.

McCain Auditorium

Military discounts are available for upcoming performances at McCain Auditorium, Kansas State University, Manhattan. There is a limit of two discount tickets per ID.

The schedule of performances includes: Sept. 28 - Yakov Kasman (pianist), Oct. 16 - Sound of Music (Broadway musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein), Oct. 22 - Othello, Oct. 25 - Heidi Grant Murphy, Oct. 30 - The Second City on Tour (Chicago's famous comedy troupe), Nov. 4 - The National Ballet of Cuba, Nov. 6 - Concertante, Dec. 5 and 6 - Cats, Feb. 6 - Giselle (Moscow Festival Ballet), Feb. 14 - The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Feb. 26 - Moscow State Radio Symphony, March 4 - Rigoletto, March 7 - The Importance of Being Earnest By Oscar Wilde, March 14 - Lúnaasa (Irish Folk music for St. Patrick's Day) and April 17 - Regina Carter Quintet.

Stop by ITR for brochure and further information.

Barney's Colorful World

Barney's Colorful World will perform at Bicentennial Center, Salina, Oct. 14 and 15. Tickets are now available at ITR. All seats reserved for \$23.50 and \$16.50 (\$7.50 per ticket handling charge).

Orlando Vacation?

Stop by ITR for hotel accommodations at military discounts in Orlando. Stay at the Lake Buena Vista Resort Hotel or Travelodge Hotel Main Gate East for only \$34 per night, with the 3rd night free! Hotels offer free shuttle service to Sea World, Universal Studios and Disney World. Let ITR put together a package.

Union Station/ Science City

Union Station and Science City in Kansas City - Imagine a city like no other in the world. A thriving metropolis that combines adventure, entertainment, discovery and excitement. The new exhibit "The Lost Spacecraft Liberty Bell 7 Recovered" is display Sept. 26 thru Jan. 4. Liberty 7 was America's second manned space mission. It sat on the ocean floor for 38 years, until it was located and discovered in 1999 by a Discovery Channel expedition. Now you can see the recovered spacecraft and experience firsthand the excitement associated with early space flight. Discount tickets available through ITR.

Kansas City Wizards

The Kansas City Wizards are having a Military Appreciation Salute Oct. 18, 7 p.m. There will be over 200 giveaway items for

fans attending the game that night! Stay after the game to enjoy a spectacular fireworks display. Each service branch will have displays in "Soccer Street." Free soccer games, inflatables and live music will be 5-7 p.m. Discount tickets are available through ITR.

Renaissance Festival

The Renaissance Festival of Kansas City is a step back into time, when lords and ladies ruled the land and when knights clad in

shining armor took to battle for a lady's honor. It is where jesters, minstrels and rogues entertained throughout the village in hopes of a day's wages. All this and more can be found at the Renaissance Festival, weekends only. The Festival runs for seven glorious weekends each autumn featuring a different theme each weekend. The adventure begins Labor Day weekend in Bonner Springs...just minutes and 500 years from downtown Kansas City. Discount tickets are available through ITR.

Kansas City Chiefs

Experience the excitement of NFL football with the Kansas City Chiefs. A limited number of tickets are available through ITR. Tickets are \$60 without transportation and \$80 with transportation. Grab some friends and tailgate at Arrowhead stadium. Support your favorite team. The home game schedule includes: Sunday - Pittsburgh Steelers, Oct. 5 - Denver Broncos, Oct. 26 - Buffalo Bills, Nov. 9 - Cleveland Browns, Nov. 23 - Oakland Raiders, Dec.

14 - Detroit Lions, Dec. 28 - Chicago Bears.

Military Salutes

Many theme parks, regional attractions and vacation destinations will salute the military with free admissions and deep discounts through late fall and early winter. Stop by ITR for additional information.

Fort Riley Sports

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America's Warfighting Center

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Wildcats take another win

By William Biles
Staff Writer

Senior quarterback Jeff Schwinn threw for 228 yards and runningback Darren Sproles ran for 152 yards and three touchdowns to help lead the No. 7 Kansas State Wildcats to a 38 - 7 victory over Division I-AA Massachusetts Saturday.

Sproles had 115 yards at halftime and sparked a 21-0 burst in the second quarter after the Minutemen surprised the Wildcats by taking a 7-3 lead.

The 'Cats improved their record to 4 - 0 on the season, and improved to 10 - 1 against Division I-AA programs under Head Coach Bill Snyder.

The Minutemen (1-1) stunned Kansas State when Jeff Krohn connected with Jason Peebler on a 65-yard touchdown play on the game's first series.

"I was really upset. I think we had a communication error," said Wildcats' defensive end, Andrew Shull. "We got some guys in the back end, probably a blown assignment. To their (U Mass) credit, they did a great job of getting the ball behind us. We have to get those things corrected and make sure we don't make those mistakes next week."

The game-opening touchdown by U Mass at the 12:37 mark was the quickest touchdown scored by a K-State opponent since Nov. 18, 2000 vs. Missouri (12:44, 1st).

Those seven points were the only points the U Mass team was able to muster for the rest of the game.

Schwinn took the reins of the team in place of the Elle Robertson. Robertson, one of the nation's top run/pass threats, went out indefinitely last week with an injured left hand.

Schwinn was intercepted twice, including on his first possession. But he eventually was able to find his range and went 17-of-26, with one touchdown pass against the Massachusetts defense.

"Jeff had a little rocky start with an interception," said Snyder. "He threw a couple of balls which probably shouldn't have been thrown. Overall, considering he had to manage the ball game in such a way that he did, he did fine."

The 'Cats took the lead when Schwinn threw a 7-yard touchdown pass to tight end Brian Casey in the second quarter to give the Wildcats the lead, 10-7, which they never relinquished.

Schwinn threw a 31-yard completion to James Terry, wide receiver, that set up Sproles with a 1-yard TD run in the third that



Post-Biles

Left, running back Darren Sproles crosses the goal line untouched to score six points against the UMass Minutemen Saturday at KSU Stadium. Below, Wildcats Quarterback Dylan Meier rushes the ball to the 2-yard line. The Wildcats defeated the Minutemen 38 - 7.



Post-Biles

See Wildcats Page 16

Fort Riley Middle School volleyball season starts

By Steven Cooke
19th PAD

The Fort Riley Middle School Trooper volleyball teams played their first games of the season Sept. 11 against the Eisenhower Middle School Eagles and the Shawnee Heights Middle School T-Birds.

At the Fort Riley Middle School Gymnasium, Team C lost both its matches, with a 2-1 loss against the Eagles and a 2-0 to the T-Birds.

Coach Terry Heina said, despite the loss, he was proud of his team and looks forward to other games.

"They played very well for their first outing," said Heina. "Their serves were well executed. They showed a lot of enthusiasm and good team work."

Heina said in the future, Team

C will continue to work on their serves as well as passing.

To keep his players motivated Heina said he tells them to keep trying hard and keep doing their best.

Team D fared a little better in their season opener to beat the Eagles, 2-1, in the first match, then fell to the T-Birds, 2-0.

For their win against the Eagles, Team D coach, Heather Tillinghast, said her team was aggressive going after the ball and served really well. But, she admitted that in the second match the 7th and 8th graders was a little sluggish. Still, Tillinghast said she was proud of all their hard work and added that they did very well for the first game.

For a lot of the young athletes, this is their first time playing the game competitively.

See Volleyball Page 16

Gym keeps deployed soldiers in shape

By John S. Wollaston
Staff Writer

BAGHDAD, Iraq - The sounds are the same. Calls for "one more rep" or "C'mon man, you can do it." Even the blaring hard rock music is the same you'd find at any gym on any Army post anywhere in the world. Except this isn't just any Army post. It's the 3rd Brigade forward operating base in Baghdad.

Ask any soldier and they'll tell you, one of the hardest things to do on any deployment, whether it's a real world mission like Operation Iraqi Freedom or a training rotation to the National Training Center, is staying in good physical shape. "There's so much going on during your (work) shift," one soldier said. "The last thing you think about is PT."

To help remedy that situation, soldiers from the Bulldog Brigade have created a gym of their own, complete with free weights and Universal Gym style equipment. Affectionately dubbed "Gold's Gym," for the commander, 3rd Brigade, 16

See Gym Page 16



19th PAD/Cook

Fort Riley Middle School Trooper volleyball Team C gives it their all at their first match of the season Sept. 11, against the Eisenhower Middle School Eagles.

Elk reintroduced to Fort Riley, Kansas Flint Hills doing well

By Alan Hynek
DES Biologist

More than 15 years have passed since Elk were first reintroduced onto Fort Riley. Over that time, the elk herd has evolved to become a symbol of Fort Riley—a symbol that has restored a native component to the Kansas Flint Hills. For those that have experienced the elk firsthand, it is a sight you most likely will never forget.

Elk were always a part of the Great Plains. Literature records indicate that herds numbering in the thousands could be found in Kansas through mid-1800's. It is fascinating to imagine what the vast herds numbering in the thousands must have looked like on the plains of Kansas.

Elk, as well as bison, were crit-

ical to the survival of Native Americans and early settlers. They were a source of food, tools, shelter and clothing. At the turn of the century, they were completely gone.

Then, in 1981, the first free ranging elk were reintroduced to the state at the Cimarron National Grassland in southwest Kansas. The herd in this extreme corner of the state grew steadily through the early 1990's to about 200 animals. However, the elk began to migrate into the states of Oklahoma and Colorado. Efforts to keep the elk on the National Grassland failed, and a hunting program aimed at reducing their numbers was implemented. Only a few elk remain on Cimarron today.

The Fort Riley herd was started in 1986, with 12 elk being released from the Maxwell Game Preserve near McPherson. Sup-

plemental stockings in 1987, 1988, 1990 and 1994 released a total of 47 elk from Colorado, Montana and South Dakota. Most releases occurred in the vicinity of the Madison Creek area on Fort

On the Wildside: News About Nature



DES Photo

Nature enthusiasts can spot elk and deer roaming on post.

Riley. For several years, the released animals and their offspring stayed in that area.

The Fort Riley herd grew to about 250 animals by 1998, when a herd reduction program was administered by Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to reduce conflicts with private landowners. The current population on Fort Riley is approximately 100 animals.

There are many ways to enjoy the elk herd, whether through hunting, photography or just viewing them out in the open prairie. Elk can be found throughout Fort Riley, but are most likely found in the northern half of the installation. To hunt elk on Fort Riley, you first have to be really lucky. Kansas elk permits are granted through a lottery drawing, with plenty of competition. Even

though your chance of an elk tag is extremely low, there are still many other ways to enjoy the elk herd.

You do not need a permit to photograph or view the elk. However, you do need to be aware of current access restrictions on Fort Riley. Please remember to review all regulations before engaging in any type of recreation on Fort Riley.

Persons coming on post must enter the installation through one of the manned access control points and obtain a vehicle pass if they are not in a vehicle with a DoD vehicle decal on the windshield.

All training areas north of Vinton School Road are still walk in areas only. Call the Conservation Division office, 239-6211, for more information.

Wildcats

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put the Wildcats on top 31-7 and sent them on their way to their 41st straight non-conference home win.

Terry had eight catches for 120 yards for the Wildcats, who have won 10 in a row over I-AA opponents, which is the fourth longest streak in the nation.

The Minutemen were effectively shut down the final three quarters and wound up with a net

27 yards rushing compared to Kansas State's 235.

Late in the fourth quarter, the crowd roared when third-string freshman quarterback Dylan Meier replaced Schwinn and hit Terry for a 27-yard gain on his first pass. Meier capped a 57-yard drive with an 8-yard scoring run.

Other game milestones for the Wildcats include Schwinn marking his career-highs in passing

attempts (26), completions (17) and yards (228 yards). He also tied a career-high in touchdowns thrown (1) and tied the longest pass of his career with a 41-yarder to Jermaine Moriera, freshman wide receiver.

Sproles rushed for over 100 yards in a game for the 13th time of his career. He is now fifth all-time in career rushing, with 2,152 total yards, surpassing teammate

Ell Roberson (2,094 total yards rushing) on the charts.

It was also the 10th consecutive game in which Sproles had a rushing touchdown. He has scored a touchdown in 15 of the 17 games he has started in. Sproles now ranks fifth all-time in career rushing touchdowns (24). He moves to 11th all-time in all-purpose yards with 2,537 and trails former Wildcat David Allen,

who ranks 10th with 2,840 yards.

Terry had a career-high eight receptions along with a career-high 120 yards receiving against U Mass. He broke his previous career-high of five receptions against Arizona State (Dec. 27, 2002) and a career-high 116 yards receiving against California (Aug. 23, 2003).

Kansas State has allowed fewer than 100 rushing yards to an

opponent in 11 of last 12 games (27 yards vs. U Mass).

The 46,102 in attendance marked the largest home crowd of the season at KSU Stadium.

The Wildcats' next game is tomorrow when they will square off against Marshall at KSU Stadium. The game is scheduled to start at 11:40 a.m.

Volleyball

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Several D team players felt good about their team's performance.

"We did wonderful," said Ieshia G-Thomas, 7th grader.

"We had really good setting," explained Chelsea Stonehouse, also a 7th grader at Fort Riley

Middle School.

Trooper Teams A and B played away games Sept. 11 at Abilene Middle School. The A team lost two while the B team won two of three games to win their match.

The Trooper teams will next play away games Sept. 23. Teams

A and B will play at Eisenhower Middle School, 3:30 p.m. Team C will play at Northern Hills Middle School, 3:45 p.m. And, Team D will play at Topeka Logan Middle School, 3:45 p.m.

Gym

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Infantry Division (Mech), Col. Russ Gold, the gym stays open 24 hours-a-day, seven days-a-week, to accommodate soldiers who work different shifts.

What the gym lacks in looks or style, it make up for in functionality. On any given night there are between 15 - 30 soldiers using the facilities at one time.

The concept for the gym came about almost a month after the brigade arrived in Baghdad. At the time, turning the basement of the building into a workout area was put on hold until soldiers of the brigade left the building and quit using the area as living quarters. Once the area was free, the task of finding weight sets and equipment benches was the next

hurdle to overcome. Slowly, the pieces fell into place, and in late June the gym was ready to open. Since then, it has seen continual use from the soldiers.

"So many times after a deployment it's tough to get back into

the kind of shape you were in before you left," said a soldier at one of the bench press machines. "But with us having this gym here, it just makes it that much easier for us, when we do go home, to still be in shape."

Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

Cyan Magenta Yellow Black

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